

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Criminal Justice Statistics Special Report

Homicide in North Dakota, 2004



Attorney General
Wayne Stenehjem

Report prepared by
Colleen Weltz
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Information Services Section

December 2005

The term "homicide," for purposes of this report, includes the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter. Homicide refers to the "willful killing of one human being by another." It does not include attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, justifiable homicides or deaths caused by gross negligence.

HOMICIDE IN 2004

- In 2004, ten homicide deaths were known to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. Based on a state population estimate of 634,500, the resulting homicide rate for the state of North Dakota was 1.6 per 100,000 population. See Table 2 on page 3 for information regarding rates for previous years.
- **Victim Gender:** Seven of the homicide victims were male.
- **Victim Age:** Seven of the victims were adults. "Adult" is defined as a person aged 18 or older. See Table 1 on page 2 for a summary of homicide incidents in 2004.
- **Weapons:** Firearms were involved in the deaths of five homicide victims. Two victims died as the result of a beating.
- **Domestic Violence:** Six of the ten homicides in 2004 resulted from domestic violence incidents. See definition on page 10.
- **Assailant Gender:** Thirteen of the identified assailants were male.
- **Assailant Age:** All of the identified assailants were adults.
- While tribal law enforcement agencies and any other federal law enforcement entities in the state do not participate in the state UCR program, every effort is made to include all homicide incidents occurring within the state's borders.

Table 1
Summary of Homicide Incidents
North Dakota, 2004

Date and Location of Incident	Victim(s)		Assailant(s)		Weapon Used	Relationship of Victim(s) to Assailant(s)	Circumstances
	AGE	SEX	AGE	SEX			
1/18/2004 Fargo	29	M	26	M	12-gauge shotgun	Brother	Domestic Violence Argument
2/13/2004 Devils Lake	34	M	20 21 21	M M M	Personal Weapon	Acquaintances	Victim found beaten in apartment building.
6/23/2004 Manango, Dickey County	17	M	33	M	Firearm	Stepson	Domestic Violence
6/27/2004 Towner County	48	F	52	M	Unknown\Burned	Girlfriend	Domestic Violence Victim found beaten and burned in a ditch near Cando.
7/19/2004 Belcourt	25	M	26	M	Firearm	Acquaintances	Victim shot while riding in a van.
8/17/2004 Hettinger	69	F	73	M	.22 Caliber Rifle	Wife	Domestic Violence Victim found shot at an old farmstead. Murder/Suicide
9/30/2004 Minot	NB	M	23	M	Asphyxiation	Son	Domestic Violence Victim found in crib not breathing.
10/27/2004 Walsh County	42	M	42	F	.22 Caliber Rifle	Husband	Domestic Violence Victim found along rural road shot in the chest.
11/3/2004 Cass County	50	M	20 21 21	M M M	Blunt Object	Acquaintances	Drug dealing
11/29/04 Bismarck	16	F	26	M	Other	Acquaintances	Victim found unresponsive in bedroom of home.

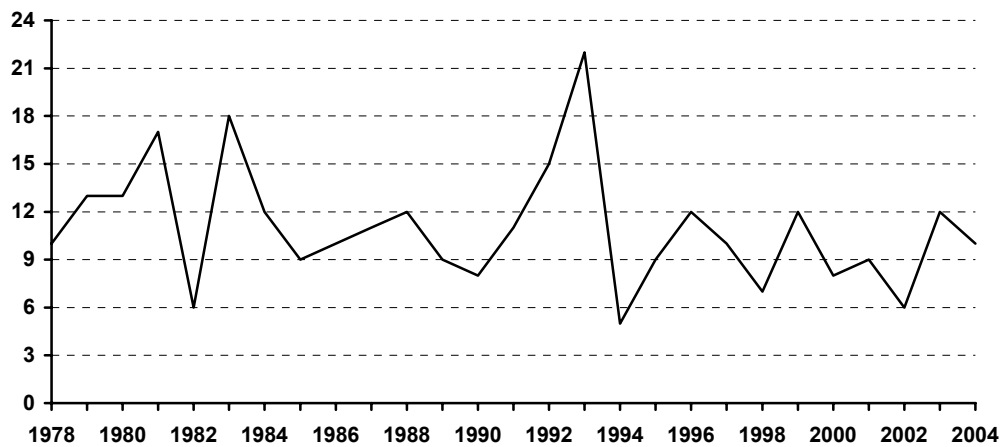
HOMICIDE TOTALS AND RATES

- Table 2 on page 3 provides yearly homicide totals and homicide rate information for North Dakota during the period 1978-2004.
- The average number of homicide deaths per year during this period is 11.

Table 2
Homicide Rate
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Homicide Total	Population Estimate	Rate/100,000 Population
1978	10	651,000	1.5
1979	13	652,000	2.0
1980	13	652,700	2.0
1981	17	652,200	2.6
1982	6	670,000	0.9
1983	18	680,000	2.6
1984	12	686,000	1.7
1985	9	686,000	1.3
1986	10	679,000	1.5
1987	11	672,000	1.6
1988	12	663,000	1.8
1989	9	660,000	1.4
1990	8	638,800	1.3
1991	11	635,000	1.7
1992	15	636,000	2.4
1993	22	635,000	3.5
1994	5	638,000	0.8
1995	9	641,000	1.4
1996	12	644,000	1.9
1997	10	641,000	1.6
1998	7	638,000	1.1
1999	12	634,000	1.9
2000	8	642,200	1.2
2001	9	634,450	1.4
2002	6	634,110	0.9
2003	12	634,000	1.9
2004	10	634,500	1.6

Figure 1
Homicide in North Dakota
1978-2004



VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- Fifty-nine percent of the 296 total homicide victims during the period 1978-2004 were male.

Table 3
Gender of Homicide Victims
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Male	Female	Total
1978	6	4	10
1979	10	3	13
1980	9	4	13
1981	9	8	17
1982	3	3	6
1983	10	8	18
1984	5	7	12
1985	7	2	9
1986	8	2	10
1987	6	5	11
1988	8	4	12
1989	4	5	9
1990	3	5	8
1991	4	7	11
1992	10	5	15
1993	15	7	22
1994	1	4	5
1995	6	3	9
1996	6	6	12
1997	7	3	10
1998	5	2	7
1999	8	4	12
2000	4	4	8
2001	7	2	9
2002	2	4	6
2003	6	6	12
2004	7	3	10
Total 1978-2004	176 (59%)	120 (41%)	296

VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS - AGE

- Of the 296 homicides during the period 1978-2004, 85 percent were adults. See Table 4 below.
- Forty-six percent of homicide victims were between the ages of 21 and 40. See Table 5 on the following page for information regarding age and gender of victims.

**Table 4
Homicide Victims
Juvenile and Adult
North Dakota, 1978-2004**

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Age Unknown	Total
1978		10		10
1979	3	10		13
1980	3	10		13
1981	2	15		17
1982		6		6
1983	2	15	1	18
1984	5	7		12
1985		9		9
1986		10		10
1987	2	9		11
1988	1	11		12
1989	2	7		9
1990		8		8
1991	3	8		11
1992	3	12		15
1993	7	15		22
1994		5		5
1995	2	7		9
1996		12		12
1997		10		10
1998	1	6		7
1999	1	11		12
2000		8		8
2001		9		9
2002	2	4		6
2003	2	10		12
2004	3	7		10
Total 1978-2004	44	251	1	296

Table 5
Homicide Victims
by Age and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Age	Male	Female	Total
Unknown		1	1
Less than 1 year	7	6	13
01-05	4	5	9
06-10	1	6	7
11-15	2	3	5
16-20	18	10	28
21-25	31	10	41
26-30	22	13	35
31-35	14	14	28
36-40	18	15	33
41-45	14	9	23
46-50	13	8	21
51-55	11	6	17
56-60	1	3	4
61-65	6	3	9
Over 65	14	8	22
Total 1978-2004	176	120	296

WEAPONS AND VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- Fifty-two percent of deaths due to homicide during the period 1978-2004 resulted from firearm use. See Table 6 below.
- In homicides involving firearms, the weapon was more likely to be a long gun than a handgun.
- Twenty-seven of the 296 total homicide deaths involved the use of "personal weapons." Personal weapons include the use of hands, fists and feet as weapons.

**Table 6
Weapons of Homicide
North Dakota, 1978-2004**

Year	Handgun	Other Firearm	Knife	Blunt Instrument	Personal Weapon	Other or Unknown	Total
1978	4	4	1		1		10
1979	3	3	2	1	3	1	13
1980	5	5	2			1	13
1981	3	5	3		1	5	17
1982		3	3				6
1983		9	4	2		3	18
1984	5	2				5	12
1985	3	2	1		2	1	9
1986	3	1	2	2	1	1	10
1987	2	4	5				11
1988	9				2	1	12
1989	2	3	2		1	1	9
1990	3	1	2	1	1		8
1991		4	1	1		5	11
1992	2	6	4	2	1		15
1993	6	4	5	2	2	3	22
1994	1	2				2	5
1995	2	2	1	2		2	9
1996	3	4	4			1	12
1997		1	1	2	4	2	10
1998		3	2			2	7
1999	1	4	3	1		3	12
2000	2	1	2	1	2		8
2001	2	3	1	1	2		9
2002	1	1			2	2	6
2003	4	7			1		12
2004		5		1	1	3	10
Total 1978-2004	66	89	51	19	27	44	296

- Firearms were used in 43 percent of the homicides of juveniles. Fifty-four percent of adult deaths due to homicide involved firearms. See Table 7 below.
- Forty-eight percent of homicides of males and 58 percent of homicides of females involved the use of firearms. See Table 8.
- Twenty-two percent of homicides of males and 11 percent of homicides of females involved knives.

Table 7
Homicide Victims
by Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Age Unknown	Total
Handgun	8	58		66
Other Firearm	11	78		89
Knife	1	50		51
Blunt Instrument	2	17		19
Personal Weapon	8	19		27
Other or Unknown	14	29	1	44
Total 1978-2004	44	251	1	296

Table 8
Homicide Victims
by Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	40	26	66
Other Firearm	45	44	89
Knife	38	13	51
Blunt Instrument	15	4	19
Personal Weapon	18	9	27
Other or Unknown	20	24	44
Total 1978-2004	176	120	296

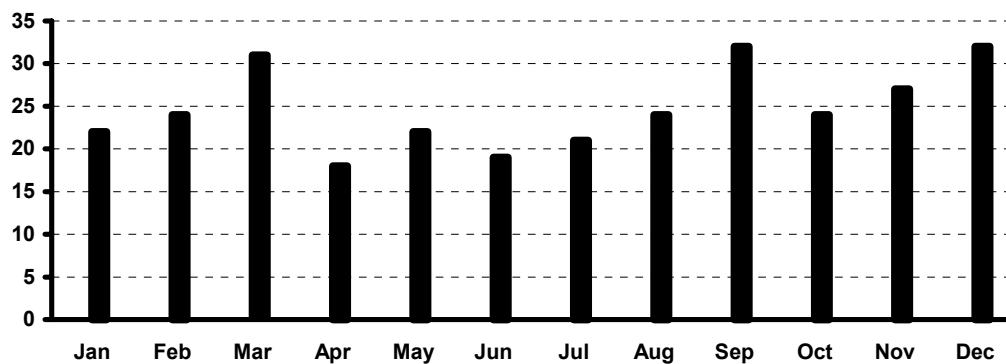
MONTH OF OCCURRENCE

- During the period 1978-2004, the months of September and December had the highest number of deaths. See Table 9 below. Figure 2 illustrates this information graphically.

Table 9
Deaths Due to Homicide
by Month, 1978-2004

Month	Number	Percent of Total Homicides
January	22	7.4 %
February	24	8.1
March	31	10.5
April	18	6.2
May	22	7.4
June	19	6.4
July	21	7.1
August	24	8.1
September	32	10.8
October	24	8.1
November	27	9.1
December	32	10.8
Total 1978-2004	296	100.0

Figure 2
Homicides by Month of Occurrence
North Dakota, 1978-2004



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS

For purposes of this report, domestic violence deaths include those involving a spouse, former spouse, parent, child, persons related by blood or marriage, persons in a present or former dating relationship, persons who are presently residing together or have resided together in the past, persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they are or have been married or have lived together at any time, other persons on premises when a domestic incident occurs, and romantic triangle situations.

- For the period 1978-2004, 51 percent of deaths due to homicide involved domestic violence.

**Table 10
Domestic Violence Deaths
North Dakota, 1978-2004**

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	No Assailant Identified	Homicide Total
1978	5	4	1	10
1979	4	9		13
1980	7	6		13
1981	8	7	2	17
1982	4	1	1	6
1983	7	10	1	18
1984	10	2		12
1985	2	7		9
1986	5	4	1	10
1987	3	7	1	11
1988	6	5	1	12
1989	5	3	1	9
1990	5	3		8
1991	5	4	2	11
1992	11	4		15
1993	11	11		22
1994	4	1		5
1995	3	6		9
1996	7	5		12
1997	2	8		10
1998	5	2		7
1999	6	6		12
2000	6	1	1	8
2001	2	5	2	9
2002	4	1	1	6
2003	8	4		12
2004	6	4		10
Total 1978-2004	151	130	15	296

- Persons killed in domestic violence incidents were more likely to be killed with a firearm than those killed in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy percent of female deaths in domestic violence incidents involved firearms, while 31 percent of female deaths in non-domestic violence incidents involved firearms.
- Seventy-three percent of female homicide victims were killed in domestic violence incidents, compared to 36 percent of males.

Table 11
Domestic Violence Deaths
by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Victim
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	5	31	3	22
Other Firearm	10	52	1	25
Knife		21	1	25
Blunt Instrument	1	5	1	12
Personal Weapon	7	4	2	14
Other or Unknown	5	10	7	17
Total 1978-2004	28	123	15	115

Table 12
Domestic Violence Deaths
by Type of Weapon and Gender of Victim
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	14	22	21	4
Other Firearm	23	39	21	5
Knife	14	7	21	5
Blunt Instrument	2	4	13	
Personal Weapon	6	5	13	3
Other or Unknown	5	10	12	12
Total 1978-2004	64	87	101	29

CLEARANCE RATES

- Cases may be "cleared by arrest" of an assailant, or "cleared exceptionally," if a physical arrest cannot be made for reasons beyond the control of law enforcement. An example of an exceptional clearance would be a case in which the assailant committed suicide after killing someone.
- "Clearances" should not be interpreted as "convictions." The information regarding clearances, collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program, reflects law enforcement activity. If an arrest is made, the UCR program considers the case cleared. UCR data does not reflect the results of prosecution of assailants.
- The average clearance rate for homicides in North Dakota during the period from 1978 to 2004 is 94 percent.

Table 13
Clearance Rates for Homicides
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Total Cleared	Total Homicides	North Dakota Clearance Rate	National Clearance Rate*
1978	9	10	90 %	76 %
1979	13	13	100	73
1980	13	13	100	72
1981	15	17	88	72
1982	5	6	83	74
1983	17	18	94	76
1984	12	12	100	74
1985	9	9	100	72
1986	9	10	90	70
1987	10	11	91	70
1988	11	12	92	70
1989	8	9	89	68
1990	8	8	100	67
1991	9	11	82	67
1992	15	15	100	65
1993	22	22	100	66
1994	5	5	100	64
1995	9	9	100	65
1996	12	12	100	67
1997	10	10	100	66
1998	7	7	100	69
1999	12	12	100	69
2000	7	8	88	63
2001	7	9	78	63
2002	5	6	83	64
2003	12	12	100	62
2004	10	10	100	63

* Clearance rates reported in annual Crime in the United States reports published by the FBI.

IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS - GENDER

- During the period 1978-2004, 90 percent of the 294 identified homicide assailants were male.
- Fifteen homicides during 1978-2004 have not had an assailant identified by law enforcement.

Table 14
Identified Homicide Assailants
by Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Male	Female	Total
1978	9		9 *
1979	14	2	16
1980	15	1	16
1981	9	3	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	17	2	19 *
1984	8		8
1985	12		12
1986	8		8 *
1987	10		10 *
1988	9	3	12 *
1989	8		8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	8		8 *
1992	11	3	14
1993	17	3	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	19		19
1996	13	2	15
1997	8	1	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	9	1	10
2000	7	1	8 *
2001	9		9
2002	5		5 *
2003	9		9
2004	13	1	14
Total 1978-2004	264 (90%)	30 (10%)	294

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

- Eighty-seven percent of the total 294 assailants identified by law enforcement were adults. See Table 15 below.
- Of the 294 assailants identified by law enforcement, 67 percent were between the ages of 16 and 35. See Table 16 on the following page for information on age and gender of identified assailants.

Table 15
Identified Homicide Assailants
Juvenile and Adult
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Juvenile	Adult	Total
1978	2	7	9 *
1979	2	14	16
1980	7	9	16
1981		12	12 *
1982		5	5 *
1983		19	19 *
1984	1	7	8
1985		12	12
1986		8	8 *
1987	2	8	10 *
1988		12	12 *
1989	2	6	8 *
1990		7	7
1991	1	7	8 *
1992	2	12	14
1993	3	17	20
1994		5	5
1995	13	6	19
1996	1	14	15
1997		9	9
1998	1	6	7
1999		10	10
2000		8	8 *
2001		9	9
2002		5	5 *
2003		9	9
2004		14	14
Total 1978-2004	37 (13%)	257 (87%)	294

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

Table 16
Identified Homicide Assailants
by Age and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Age	Male	Female	Total
01-05			0
06-10			0
11-15	19	2	21
16-20	53	4	57
21-25	62	3	65
26-30	37	2	39
31-35	28	7	35
36-40	20	4	24
41-45	17	7	24
46-50	7		7
51-55	6	1	7
56-60	6		6
61-65	4		4
Over 65	5		5
Total 1978-2004	264	30	294

WEAPONS AND IDENTIFIED ASSAILANT CHARACTERISTICS

- In homicide incidents involving firearms, juvenile assailants were much more likely to use firearms other than handguns. For adults, long guns were used more often than handguns.
- Male assailants were more likely to use firearms in homicide incidents, while females were more likely to use knives.
- For incidents involving the use of firearms, male assailants were more likely to use rifles or shotguns than handguns. Conversely, females were more likely to use handguns than other types of firearms.

Table 17
Identified Assailants
by Type of Weapon and Age Category
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Juvenile	Adult	Total
Handgun	2	52	54
Other Firearm	19	66	85
Knife	6	52	58
Blunt Instrument	4	23	27
Personal Weapon	2	28	30
Other or Unknown	4	36	40
Total 1978-2004	37	257	294

Table 18
Identified Assailants
by Type of Weapon and Gender
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Male	Female	Total
Handgun	48	6	54
Other Firearm	80	5	85
Knife	45	13	58
Blunt Instrument	26	1	27
Personal Weapon	29	1	30
Other or Unknown	36	4	40
Total 1978-2004	264	30	294

- Forty-five percent of assailants identified by law enforcement were involved in domestic violence incidents. See Table 19 below.
- Assailants were more likely to use firearms in domestic incidents than in non-domestic incidents. See Table 20.

Table 19
Identified Homicide Assailants
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Year	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
1978	4	5	9 *
1979	5	11	16
1980	9	7	16
1981	7	5	12 *
1982	4	1	5 *
1983	4	15	19 *
1984	6	2	8
1985	2	10	12
1986	4	4	8 *
1987	3	7	10 *
1988	6	6	12 *
1989	4	4	8 *
1990	4	3	7
1991	4	4	8 *
1992	8	6	14
1993	8	12	20
1994	4	1	5
1995	4	15	19
1996	7	8	15
1997	2	7	9
1998	5	2	7
1999	5	5	10
2000	6	2	8 *
2001	2	7	9
2002	4	1	5 *
2003	6	3	9
2004	6	8	14
Total 1978-2004	133 (45%)	161 (55%)	294

* Indicates that at least one incident for the year does not have an identified assailant.

Table 20
Weapon Use by Identified Assailants
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Total
Handgun	30	24	54
Other Firearm	50	35	85
Knife	21	37	58
Blunt Instrument	5	22	27
Personal Weapon	11	19	30
Other or Unknown	16	24	40
Total 1978-2004	133	161	294

- Blunt instruments were more likely to be used by assailants in non-domestic incidents.
- Seventy-three percent of identified female assailants were involved in domestic incidents, compared to 42 percent for males. See Table 22.

Table 21
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
by Type of Weapon and Age Category of Assailant
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Handgun	1	29	1	23
Other Firearm	5	45	14	21
Knife	3	18	3	34
Blunt Instrument		5	4	18
Personal Weapon	1	10	1	18
Other or Unknown	2	14	2	22
Total 1978-2004	12	121	25	136

Table 22
Domestic/Non-Domestic Incidents
by Type of Weapon and Gender of Assailant
North Dakota, 1978-2004

Weapon	Domestic		Non-Domestic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Handgun	26	4	22	2
Other Firearm	45	5	35	
Knife	11	10	34	3
Blunt Instrument	5		21	1
Personal Weapon	10	1	19	
Other or Unknown	14	2	22	2
Total 1978-2004	111	22	153	8